

GEOGRAPHIC SUPPORT STUDY

THE SINO-MONGOLIAN BORDER TREATY OF 1962



CIA/RR GS 64-6

March 1964

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Office of Research and Reports

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For the second time in this century (the first was in 1915) an initial step has been taken toward an over-all settlement of the border between Outer Mongolia and China. In Peking on 26 December 1962, envoys of the respective regimes signed the newly drafted Boundary Treaty Between the People's Republic of China and the People's Republic of Mongolia.* The treaty provides for the establishment of the Sino-Mongolian Joint Boundary Survey Commission to survey the entire border and set up boundary markers. Any potentially serious issues that may have been involved in the preliminary talks have been rendered inconspicuous in the treaty itself, which appears to be little more than a working paper that provides an ostensibly temporary settlement. Much local confusion remains to be resolved. The treaty does not bind the two countries to any specific time limit within which the necessary surveying and mapping is to be undertaken. The likelihood that final demarcation will actually be accomplished, however, is greater now than in 1915 because the respective regimes apparently are more stable and have better mapmaking facilities.

* For translations of the version released in Peking in the Jen-min jih-pao for 26 March 1963, see JPRS 18,618 (15 Apr 63), JPRS 18,730 (Errata; 17 May 63) and Current Background, No. 707 (American Consulate General, Hong Kong, 9 Apr 63). All three documents are UNCLASSIFIED. For a translation of the version released in Ulan Bator in the newspaper Unen on the same date, see JPRS 19,729 (17 May 63), UNCLASSIFIED.

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General Comments

An examination of the description of the border in translations of the Chinese and Mongolian versions of the treaty reveals no obvious imbalance of valuable territorial gains, although "paper" losses were greater for the Chinese, whose original claims were less reasonable. The areas affected by delimitation of the previously undefined border are reported to total 70,000 square kilometers (27,000 square miles). Of the 17,000 square kilometers (6,600 square miles) that were "in dispute," about 12,000 square kilometers (4,600 square miles) reportedly were awarded to Mongolia and the remainder to Communist China. The document records, apparently, the best delineation of the border that was possible in terms that could be agreed on at short notice by using existing maps and without recourse to further field surveying. It appears to confirm in a general way much of the status quo ante, and in several sectors it eliminates Chinese claims that obviously were vague and apparently somewhat irrational.

The locations of the several hundred boundary points that are mentioned in the first article of the treaty are not adequately known. To locate them definitively, Article III establishes the Joint Boundary Survey Commission and authorizes a complete survey of the boundary. Article II identifies certain matters of potential local controversy -- the demarcation of the boundary where it follows a river or stream, the determination of ownership of existing islands or those that might appear, the joint use of water from boundary rivers or from wells and springs on the boundary line, and the joint use and management of boundary roads under

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arrangements to be determined later -- and on these points records agreement in principle between the contracting parties. The fourth and final article provides for ratification of the treaty, which took place on 26 March 1963 at Ulan Bator.

In the fourth article the statement that the Chinese and Mongolian texts are equally valid takes a great deal for granted. Article I of the treaty actually presents not one but two descriptions of the border, which have been combined into a single statement. Each country has given precedence in the text to its own preferred description of each boundary point, followed in parentheses by the alternative description that is preferred by the other country. An examination of the two descriptions thus combined in Article I suggests that the maps and surveys put forward by the two sides to support their respective views often disagreed. More often than not, for example, the Mongolian and the Chinese versions differ in their selection of both place names and elevations of border points. Neither text gives any locations by compass bearing or coordinates. Some selected border points are given by distance and direction only, usually (but not always) in relation to another point or to a terrain feature such as a height of land. The distances that are mentioned, however, are short and are stated only to the closest 50 or 100 meters.* They probably are meant to be no more than ground directions for the survey group to follow.

The maps that are appended to the treaty are stated to be in Chinese and in Mongolian and are at the scale of 1:1,000,000. At such small scale, it

* Measurements in the treaty and throughout this report are given in the metric system.

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would be impossible to resolve minor differences. To gain greater correspondence of the local data that are presented in the two proposed delin-
eations, maps at larger scales or suitable aerial photography would be
needed. If there is no other basis for agreement than that which is
stated in the treaty, then grounds for local controversy remain and may
engender dispute. Some undisclosed substitute for suitable maps, possibly
aerial photographs that were mutually acceptable, may have served as the
actual basis for agreement on the identification of selected border points.
Such photographs would have provided the reference points that are men-
tioned in the treaty and that would have been impossible to locate on the
1:1,000,000 maps appended to the treaty. It is difficult to conceive of any
other way in which the two countries could achieve agreement on the selec-
tion of border points despite the lack of agreement on names and elevations
for most of the points along the entire border.

Official maps are not available in Washington, but other maps used in
conjunction with the text of the document suffice to locate many of the
points that are identified in the treaty by name, by elevation, or by both.
Of the several hundred points that were mentioned in the treaty as being in
agreement, about 60 have been identified within reasonable limits of proba-
bility. These 60 points form the basis for this assessment of the new
border treaty. More points were identified in those sectors where the pro-
posed new border follows the old border as defined on Soviet and US maps
than in those sectors where it appears to have been revised.

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Detailed Comments

West of the 92d meridian, in the region of the Altai Mountains and on the eastern fringes of Dzungaria (see Sector A on Map 39198), the Chinese have surrendered their extensive "paper" claims of recent years and seem to have adopted the border roughly as it appears on the 1958 edition of the standard Soviet series of hypsographic maps at the scale of 1:2,500,000.

The area of eastern Sinkiang between 94° and 96° East (Sector B), which the Chinese Communists in recent years have assigned to Mongolia, reverts to China according to the new treaty.

Between 96° and 110° East (Sector C) the border apparently follows closely the boundary that is shown on Soviet maps. This sector includes the area north of O-chi-na Ho (Etsin Gol), where the boundary passes within 16 kilometers north of Gashuun Nuur (Chü-yen Hai) and apparently near the 1,000-meter elevation. (Soviet and US maps differ on elevations in this area.)

For an airline distance of slightly more than 550 kilometers between 110°30' and 116° East (Sector D) the border alignment cannot be firmly ascertained from the text of the treaty. West of the international highway and railroad in the Erh-lien -- Dzamiin Üüde zone, the Mongolians may have yielded territory that lies north of the border as now shown on Soviet maps. The only points that could be identified in this zone lie within the northernmost stretch of 15 kilometers. The new border appears

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to run parallel to the highway and railroad for a few kilometers but not for the entire 80 kilometers shown on Western maps. It is likely that the border depicted on Soviet maps to the east of the railroad is still valid generally but not in detail. The Chinese claims in this area were depicted vaguely and probably have been eliminated.

The rest of the border (Sector E) extends eastward from 116° East to a prominent peak and from there runs generally northward and westward to the Siberian border. This sector of the border has been redefined selectively and appears to represent a combination of segments of the various preexisting claims. Buyr Nuur (Pei-erh Hu), a lake near which in the past there has been occasional border friction, apparently has been redivided between the two countries. The larger part probably remains in Chinese hands. For the most part the boundary east and southeast of the lake now tends to follow streams in accordance with the earlier Chinese claims instead of following the cross-country lines that are shown on Soviet maps.

The border extends a bit farther eastward than it has been shown previously on any map. The easternmost point is the prominent peak that is mentioned above, and the problem of its identification is typical of some of the problems encountered in the study of this treaty. On Soviet and US maps the peak is shown at approximately 46°39'N-119°55'E, but it is not named, and no elevation is indicated. The name Bogd Uul, which is given to this peak in the Mongol version, means merely "Holy Mountain," and this is not very specific. Soyoldz Uul (So-yüeh-erh-chi Shan), the name

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which is given to the peak in the Chinese version, means "mountain at the corner point." The only mountain bearing this name appears on a map of questionable reliability, on which it is located 42 kilometers west-southwest of 46°39'N-119°55'E. The confusion of names is immaterial, however, if, as seems likely, the mountain is uniquely conspicuous in the surrounding region and if it can be identified on aerial photographs. In accepting this peak as a border point, the Chinese Communists have relinquished some territory on the west-facing slopes of the watershed, but have apparently gained territory on the northeastern bank of the Halhain Gol (Ha-lo-hsin Ho, Ha-la-ha Ho, Halhyn Gol, Khalkhin Gol).

The juxtaposition of two descriptions of the same border is at the root of the formidable complexity of Article I. Typically, in the Chinese version, the preferred Chinese rendition of a Mongolian place name (with an elevation stated in some instances) is followed in parentheses by the Chinese rendition of a different Mongolian place name (and a different elevation, if any). The parenthetical information is the same description of the point as was put in a preferred position in the Mongolian version. The Mongolians have followed the same editorial practice but have reversed the order of the entries.

The border point that is cited at the end of Paragraph 15 and again at the beginning of Paragraph 16, in both versions, provides an example of the textual rearrangement that results from this practice. The Mongolian version reads: Tsagaan Nuuryn Oboo (Bumbatyn Oboo); the Chinese version reads: Pen-pa-t'ai-yin Ao-pao (Ch'a-kan-no-erh Ao-pao . . .). The complexity is compounded when the points of reference themselves are dif-

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ferent. For example, the point that is cited at the end of Paragraph 18 and the beginning of Paragraph 19 is called Pa-yen-hu-shu [Bayan Hushuu] by the Chinese but no elevation is given. The same point is unnamed by the Mongolians, who described it simply as a point about 4 kilometers west and somewhat north of the Jargalant Uhaa Oboo [Chi-erh-chia-lang-t'u-hua Ao-pao], at an elevation of 1,296.6 meters. The only assurance that the points that are described actually are identical is the fact that both descriptions are contained in both versions of the treaty and that Article IV states that both versions have equal validity.

The reader may find in the treaty one or two elevations for each point or none at all. He may find one or two place names of Mongolian linguistic origin -- each of which is transcribed twice, once directly from the Mongolian and once from the Chinese transcription -- or he may find none at all. Thus the range of choice in interpretation of the text of the treaty is very wide indeed. If all this duplicative information is equally valid, then the over-all validity of the unreconciled information in the treaty is questionable.

Further evidence of failure or inability to reconcile data used in the treaty is suggested by analysis of the 27 points that begin and end the 26 paragraphs of Article I.* Those that have been identified appear to be easily located reference points that could be used to terminate segments of the boundary. Their prominence in the text suggests that they are the

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principal points of reference in the treaty and that they set the limits within which discrepancies or unresolved claims pertaining to intervening points should be reconciled. In only 15 instances, however, do the elevations preferred by the two parties agree. In only 8 instances do the name preferences agree. In 8 instances both the preferred names and the preferred elevations disagree, and the basis for agreement on selecting these points as points is not stated.

The anchor point at the western end of the boundary (see Map 39198) is important because of its primary location in any delineation of the boundary. In both the Mongolian and the Chinese versions the elevation of this point is given as 4,050 meters. If the peak that is mentioned in Paragraph 1 is the same as the one at the trisection of the Mongolia-USSR-Sinkiang border (49°08'N-87°45'E),* which is shown on a recent Soviet map as being 4,355 meters above sea level, there is an unexplained difference in elevation of 305 meters, or about 1,000 feet. On available maps, it is impossible to identify the western anchor point with reference to the highest elevation of the mountain that is mentioned in the text, for which the Chinese prefer the name of K'uei-t'un Shan or Huyten Uul, and the Mongolians prefer Taban Bodg Uul or T'a-pen-po-ke Ta-wu-la. The Chinese call the associated mountain mass simply the A-erh-t'ai Shan-mo, or Altai Mountains, whereas the Mongolians prefer a more proprietary designation, the Mongol Altayn Nuruu, or Mongolian Altai Mountains. The two countries also qualify somewhat their agreement on the anchor point

* Location given in an official gazetteer. The location on AMS Series 1301, Sheet NM 45, is 49°10'N-87°47'E.

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in the east. The Mongolians in their version call it the 645.0-meter elevation point of Tarbagan Dahyn Oboo, whereas the Chinese call it the 645.5-meter point northeast of T'a-erh-ken-no-erh, or Targan Nuur. It appears that locations of only a few points along the entire border are known accurately. These points probably are the major peaks and the anchor points at the two ends of the border. For the segments between these few known points, the Chinese Communists and the Mongolians apparently have attempted to reconcile two sets of data that are only partially reconcilable.

Recent progress in the establishment of an independent capability for accurate surveying facilitates the Chinese Communist commitment to participate in a new survey. The Chinese Communists probably can now establish, for the first time, the precise locations of points along the Sino-Mongolian border by using their own first-order triangulation net, which is based on the Peking datum. (Nationalist Chinese surveying was based on the Nanking datum.)

Evaluation of the long-range prospects for future accord or dispute over territory would be facilitated by the acquisition of more detailed maps of the border areas. For the present, it appears that: (1) some territory in the west was exchanged -- the Chinese claims to the Mongolian portions of the Altai range were abandoned, the border in the Baydag Bodgo mountains apparently was fixed at the ridge line, and part of the Gobi Desert northeast of Hami was recovered by China; and (2) some territory in the east also was exchanged -- Mongolian claims to territory northeast

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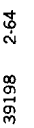
of Halhaiin Gol were abandoned in lieu of an extension of the border eastward to the main ridge of the Greater Khingan Range. It also appears that some readjustment was made, probably a reduction in length, in the stretch of border that formerly paralleled the Trans-Mongolian Railroad for 85 kilometers; and that there was a substantial surrender of ambitious but unjustified Chinese claims along the rest of the border.*

The stated details on which the treaty is based may be quickly superseded as a basis for Sino-Mongolian border relations or they may conceivably have to stand for an extended period. Pretexts for haggling about any part of the border undoubtedly can be found if it is the intention of either party to be disagreeable. Final accomplishment of the boundary demarcation will depend to a large extent on the tides of international politics and internal developments in the respective regimes. Technical factors pose no inherent obstacles to completion of the planned survey, but a vast amount of detailed mapmaking remains to be done.

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* See map attachment (CIA Map Library Call No. 148086; UNCLASSIFIED) to [REDACTED] for a schematic portrayal of former claims along the border.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Geography Division, ORR

Project Initiation Memorandum

Project No. 60.2116

28 December 1962

1. Subject of Proposed Project: Assistance to Office of Current Intelligence.
2. Statement of Problem: As an outgrowth of the transfer to OCI of OBI's Research Division and of changes in the world scene, we anticipate increases in OCI business. Most of this will involve cases in which Geography Division analysts are called on to provide informal assistance by answering spot queries and providing substantive advice on matters within our competence. Singly, no one of these cases requires a significant expenditure of D/OG time; collectively, they will represent a significant bloc of manhours. More substantial requests will be separately reported on and approval sought.
3. Requester: OCI.
4. Responsible Analysts: All analysts, all branches.
5. Completion Date: Continuing.
6. Comments: This project initiation memorandum is mainly to facilitate record keeping, and compares with similar "umbrella" projects for odd services to ERA, ONE, and OSI.

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Chief, Geography Division

Approved:

Chief, Geographic Research

Date

A/Assistant Director, ORR

Date

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